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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9870  
INFO IGAD COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMAAASY ANKARA 001

RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY SANAA  
AMCONSUL DUBAI  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000428

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/CA, AF/E, CA/FPP  
PASS TO INL/HSTC  
POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS  
FRANKFURT FOR RCO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/26/2018  
TAGS: [CVIS](#) [KFRD](#) [CPAS](#) [CMFT](#) [ASEC](#) [ER](#)  
SUBJECT: ERITREANS USING FRAUDULENT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

REF: ASMARA 000346

Classified By: CDA Melinda Tabler-Stone for Reason 1.4 (d)

1, (SBU) Summary: Well-placed Embassy contacts have informed post that Eritreans are using false travel documents to leave the country. Hundreds of Eritreans reportedly purchased Turkish visas, while at least five others purchased false Belgian or Italian passports, obtained exit permission from the Eritrean government, passed through Eritrean immigration, and boarded aircraft destined for Frankfurt. Asmara's visa section remains closed to visa services and is therefore not experiencing these trends first-hand. End Summary.

#### ERITREANS PURCHASE TURKISH VISAS

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¶2. (C) A well-placed Egypt Air employee in Asmara informed Emboff that between 25 and 50 Eritreans with Turkish visas depart Asmara on each of the twice weekly Egypt Air flight to Cairo, a sharp increase from previous numbers. He believed these visas were purchased illegally. Three Embassy LES recently showed Emboff their Eritrean passports containing new Turkish visas, although the LES did not admit the visas were fraudulently obtained.

¶3. (SBU) Visas to Turkey are obtained in Asmara through Turkish Honorary Consul Amanuel Tesfay, who is also an Amcit. Tesfay accepts the visa applications and forwards them to the Turkish Embassy in Sana'a for processing. The Turkish visas seen by Emboff were both signed by Sinan Kuzum, believed toQbQ a Turkish Coslar Officer stationed in Sana'a.

#### BELGIAN AND ITALIAN PASSPORTS FOR SALE IN DUBAI

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¶4. (SBU) Lufthansa's head in Asmara Maha Lueck told Emboffs six Eritreans with fraudulent passports boarded Lufthansa's Asmara to Frankfurt flight in separate incidents occurring over several weeks. Only one of the six passengers' passport was detected by Eritrean immigration, and the person was removed from the aircraft after boarding. The other five individuals arrived in Frankfurt and claimed asylum. Four of the passports appeared to be genuine. The fifth passport, Belgian, was obviously altered, with lifted lamination and cut marks on the bio page. According to German immigration officials, the passports were purchased in Dubai for \$10,000 each. Eritrean immigration implied to Lueck they are

primarily concerned with the Eritrean entrance and exit visas of European and American passport holders, and paid little attention to the passport's validity.

15. (C) Comment: Conoff notes an increasing number of Eritrean contacts plan to leave Eritrea permanently, hoping to claim asylum in Europe or the U.S. Increasing shortages of basic necessities, bad economic news, increased repression, and a poor rainy season lead more Eritreans to give up hope on their country and look for a way out. Consular officers should be aware of these trends when adjudicating visas for Eritrean applicants. End Comment.

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